



EXPLORING TEACHERS' VS. STUDENTS' ATTITUDES TOWARD FIXED LESSON PLANS

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Abstract

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Traditional educational settings often rely on fixed lesson plans (LPs) to guide instruction and ensure classroom consistency. While fixed LPs provide structure and organization, some teachers believe they limit their autonomy and creativity in the classroom. Additionally, students' attitudes toward fixed LPs can vary significantly, with some feeling stifled by the need for more flexibility and individualized instruction. By examining both perspectives, educators can identify potential challenges and opportunities for enhancing instructional practices better to meet the diverse needs of today's learners. The current study investigated teachers' and students' attitudes toward fixed LPs in the Iranian EFL context. It also explored the correlation between teachers' and students' attitudes toward fixed LPs. This research adopted a quantitative, non-experimental descriptive design to explore and meet the study's objectives. The study population consisted of 80 teachers and 80 students selected through convenience sampling. Participants were asked to rank planning elements and indicate how planning matters through questionnaires and interviews; their classes were also observed. Descriptive statistics, i.e., frequencies and percentages, were used to analyze quantitative data. The Pearson product-moment correlation was employed to examine the research questions and clarify the correlation between teachers' and students' attitudes toward fixed LPs. The results revealed a medium, positive correlation between the two variables, with higher teachers' attitudes toward fixed LPs being associated with higher students' attitudes toward fixed LPs. The study indicated that teaching language skills through effective lesson planning eliminated disruptive behavior and facilitated teaching and learning. It also found that how teachers dealt with fixed LPs influenced students' attitudes toward them. This research offers practical implications, suggesting that teachers should be conscious of fixed LPs, master fixed LPs, and consider their quality with care. They should also try to add creativity when the students get bored to provoke more engagement and, consequently, higher-quality learning.

Keywords: Teachers' Attitudes; Students Attitudes; Fixed Lesson Plans; LP; Correlation

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INTRODUCTION

When teachers lack a firm grasp of the fundamentals of curriculum, learning, and evaluation, their students view them as adrift in the classroom, like a ship without a rudder. Specifically, a teacher in the classroom cannot disseminate the learning outcomes of a lesson and fails to remain on track when there is no lesson plan. A teacher's lack of a lesson plan generally leads to aimless wandering in the classroom, non-academic

conversations, contradictions between prior and current teachings, and no adequate and lifetime learning (Iqbal et al., 2021).

Well-thought-out lesson plans will more likely maintain the attention of students and increase the likelihood that they will be interested. A clear plan will also maximize time and minimize confusion about what is expected of the students, thus making classroom management easier (Farrell, 2021). Additionally, it reduces uncertainty and self-doubt; a teacher can manage his time, effort, and resources efficiently with a lesson plan. Furthermore, lesson plans can help teachers achieve their goals and objectives appropriately, help them have great self-confidence, and help them tackle problems (Heidari & Heidari, 2020). An LP also displays the teacher's knowledge, skill, and expertise. It provides pupils with various activities to meet their diverse needs. Applying and practicing the LP components allows students to use their newly acquired information and skills in a classroom setting (Harmer, 2015). Effective teachers with fixed LPs are said to have a prominent role in students' favorable outcomes; the LP they use and the decisions they make through it are the main components of that effectiveness (Amuei et al., 2017). Although there are some demographic variables, such as gender, teaching experience, and educational degree, that affect the lesson planning process (Moiinvaziri & Shatery, 2022), teachers' attitudes toward lesson planning and how lesson plans influence teachers in the method of teaching are of great importance. On the other hand, most of the research has also concluded that a student's attitude is an integral part of learning and should, therefore, become an essential component of second or foreign-language learning pedagogy (Getie, 2020). Attitude is a critical factor in many aspects of human life; a learner's characteristics, such as attitude, play a crucial role in a student's achievement in a subject (Kpolovie et al., 2014; Nworgu, 2019).

Attitude has an evaluative aspect, and its influence on an individual affects their disposition and tendency to react positively or negatively to something. Students' attitudes are the main factors determining their success in the English language learning process (Sánchez & Gavilán, 2017). On top of that teachers' attitudes toward LPs significantly impact students' achievement and competence (Güneşli & Aslan, 2009). Teachers with positive attitudes can develop mutually positive attitudes among students. Learners' attitudes also change through how they are taught, which is accordingly tied up with the positive or negative attitude of the teacher towards the teaching-learning process. Moreover, students' attitudes and feelings about lesson planning significantly affect the teaching process (Gowri & Mariammal, 2011). However, a review of existing literature on lesson planning in the Iranian EFL context suggests that the psychological-related factors, particularly the feelings and attitudes of teachers and students and any possible correlation, received little attention. Another issue is that most of the research on LPs that has already been done focuses on how lesson plans are utilized in English classrooms and only describes the characteristics and structure of lesson plans. Little is known about the relative importance of these two crucial elements—teachers' and students' attitudes—and how they interact. Investigating teachers' and students' views toward fixed LPs and examining their correlation is necessary to fill this gap in the literature, so the current study aimed to ascertain teachers' and students' attitudes toward fixed LPs and investigate how teachers and students feel about fixed LPs in the Iranian EFL context. The Iranian Language Institute (ILI) endeavors to provide a structured and standardized learning environment, making it an ideal research location for investigating teachers' and students' attitudes toward fixed lesson plans (LPs). At ILI, strict adherence to fixed LPs is an inseparable part of its pedagogical framework, ensuring consistency in instruction and learning. This setting prepares the ground for an in-depth exploration of how teachers utilize LPs—whether as effective guides or restrictive tools—and how their attitudes

affect classroom dynamics. Furthermore, the diverse student community at ILI, with varying proficiency levels and learning styles, presents a unique opportunity to examine how fixed LPs meet the needs of learners and impact engagement, motivation, and academic achievement. Additionally, due to institutional expectations, most teachers at ILI feel strongly obligated to adhere strictly to LPs, even when students might either value the clarity and structure or feel constrained by the lack of flexibility and creativity. Despite ILI's prominence, there is limited research on how these attitudes influence teaching and learning processes within its specific framework. Investigating this gap can provide valuable insights into improving LP implementation and fostering positive outcomes in similar EFL settings. Consequently, teachers' and students' attitudes were supposed to be examined simultaneously as doing so will lead to more standardized and codified teachers' and students' behavioral patterns in the educational system.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Teachers' and students' attitudes toward fixed lesson plans are crucial in educational settings. Understanding the background of fixed lesson plans is fundamental to exploring these attitudes. According to Rasuli (2022), fixed lesson plans are structured educational frameworks that guide teaching and learning activities. They serve as a roadmap for educators to deliver content and achieve specific learning outcomes. Furthermore, Vashe et al. (2016) underlined the importance of using the curriculum in teaching to enhance students' deep approach to learning and critical thinking skills. The deep approach incorporates critical examination of novel concepts, connecting them to previously known ones, and applying such knowledge for problem-solving in various contexts, which is integrated into fixed lesson plans to engage students and facilitate learning; the incorporation of such approaches as examples with various teachers' or students' attitudes, fixed lesson plans can be tailored to meet teachers' and students' diverse needs and interests. This background sets the stage for a comprehensive examination of how attitudes toward fixed lesson plans impact the teaching and learning process. In other domains, such as scientific education, research revealed that the teacher's attitudes influence teaching and learning; for example, successful teaching is determined by instructors' enthusiasm for the subject at hand. Consequently, the instructor variable is the most important predictor of student attitude (Osborne et al., 2003).

Lesson planning is viewed differently by teachers and students; they both have one-of-a-kind attitudes toward lesson planning preparation and implementation. Research has shown that while some teachers feel empowered by fixed lesson plans, others see them as hindering their autonomy and professional judgment. Understanding these diverse perspectives is crucial for creating an educational environment that supports effective teaching practices and teacher autonomy (Gafoor et al., 2010). Teachers with favorable mindsets may effectively promote positive attitudes in their pupils; they also argue that no matter how well-planned and conducted teacher training programs are, if teachers have negative views about planning, they will be ineffective and inefficient. (Zulu, 2016). Students' perspectives on fixed lesson plans shape their learning experiences. While teachers often rely on structured lesson plans to guide instruction, students' reactions and interactions with these fixed plans can provide valuable insights into the effectiveness of such approaches. According to Karmina et al. (2024), cooperative learning strategies implemented within fixed lesson plans can enhance students' self-awareness, social awareness, and decision-making skills. Additionally, Lee

et al. (2024) suggested that incorporating a learning-by-design project approach, where students actively engage in lesson planning and virtual classroom design, can help bridge the gap between theory and practice for preservice teachers. By considering these perspectives, educators can better understand how fixed lesson plans impact student learning outcomes and tailor their instructional strategies to meet students' diverse needs and preferences.

Several reasons corroborate the significance of lesson planning for both teachers and students. It enables teachers to plan instructional activities more effectively to satisfy students' learning needs and discern between instructions to entitle all students to benefit from them (Oser & Baeriswyl, 2001). An LP assists teachers in setting goals, developing learning activities, and evaluating the outcomes of instruction through appropriate assessments (Jalongo et al., 2007). Additionally, planning helps teachers to organize and structure instructional activities. It excites students' cognitive stimulation to participate in deeper mental investigations of the subject matter within the learning concept. Planning enables teachers to create visible lesson structures and deep learning systems. Notwithstanding, most teachers only organize conditions to align students' internal activities (Oser & Baeriswyl, 2001). It enables teachers to possess guidelines involving objectives, knowledge, sequencing, activity procedure, usage, and assessment for leading their students to arrive at predetermined learning destinations (Vdovina & Gaibisso, 2013). An LP gives teachers structure and an overall form, ensuring students that the teacher cares about the class. Additionally, a plan paves the way for teachers to diagnose and predict possible issues. An LP, whether a detailed document or hastily scribbled note, is a proposal for action. In other words, the teacher has gathered what will be taught by putting down all the necessary points as a document or a note (Harmer, 2015).

Discussion about LPs primarily pertains to teachers' ability to make good LPs and contends difficulties in preparing them. In this regard, Straessle (2014) investigated 184 U.S. K-12 teachers' attitudes about diverse lesson planning features. He attempted to illuminate the research-based views of lessons, planning to influence student success and perceptions and impressing specific demographic characteristics. Two researcher-made surveys were used to collect data. Participants were asked to rank seven elements of teacher planning in the order they teach those qualities influencing students' success and aspects of providing homework and logically structured lessons. Finally, they were asked to self-report the elements used in the class and how they plan lessons. They indicated no difference among the portions of lesson planning, yet utilizing obvious tasks and learning objectives was more significant than the other aspects.

Likewise, Emiliasari (2019) tried to investigate what the teachers perceive about teaching English and examine the use of LP in teaching English in three secondary schools in Majalengka. Data were gathered through interviews, observation, and documentation. The researchers found that teachers who provide LPs follow similar steps. However, the teachers could not compile all the activities in LPs; in these cases, they made choices to compensate for the lack.

Regarding how educators see lesson preparation, Kamran & Sharghi (2011) investigated the attitudes and comprehension of Ardabil University of Medical Sciences educators toward this process. Despite their lack of a thorough understanding of lesson preparation, they concluded that the participants had positive sentiments about it.

Nesari & Heidari (2014) conducted a study in which they surveyed 93 EFL instructors in Iranian high schools and institutes to find out how they felt about lesson planning. The participants thought that preparation for lessons was essential. A year later, Heidari et al. (2015) looked at how the same set of participants' opinions were affected by

gender. An independent sample t-test was employed to assess the data. The statistical study revealed that women were more enthusiastic about lesson planning.

Sahin-Taskin (2017) examined novice teachers' views of LP and how they believed their plans would help them succeed in their teaching practice in a sample of 18 primary pre-service teachers through semi-structured interviews. To analyze the data, researchers used content analysis. Two main categories of data analysis suggest the emergence of (a) Difficulties in Planning a Lesson and (b) Functions of LPs. It made sense that inexperienced teachers cared about the importance of LPs; however, they needed some help in preparation, which negatively affected their planning.

Heidari & Heidari (2020) examined the effect of experience and teaching context on the perceptions of 93 high school and institute EFL teachers in Ilam, Iran, about LP. They found no significant difference in the effect of experience and teaching context with LP. Likewise, Moiiinvaziri & Shatery (2022) investigated 120 EFL teachers' perceptions of lesson planning and implementation. The role of gender, teaching experience, and academic degrees were also examined. Data were gathered through a closed-ended questionnaire. The results of the data analysis showed that EFL teachers are moderately willing to use LPs and their variant aspects. The study population had similar perceptions in terms of their demographic features.

Most studies about LPs in the EFL contexts revolve around making LPs and the difficulties in preparing them. However, little attention has been paid to examining teachers' vs. students' attitudes toward fixed LPs, particularly in the EFL context of Iran. Thus, the present study sought a closer and more in-depth look at the attitudes of teachers vs. students toward fixed LPs. According to the purpose of this study, the following research questions have arisen:

1. What are the attitudes of Iranian EFL teachers toward fixed LPs?
2. What are the attitudes of Iranian EFL students toward fixed LPs?
3. Is there any correlation between teachers' and students' attitudes toward fixed LPs?

METHODS

The present research adopted a descriptive design to investigate teachers' and students' attitudes. Owing to the use of questionnaires, interviews, and class observations, the current study benefited from triangulation, which improves the correctness of research findings by allowing data collecting from several sources to verify the truth (Appleton, 2005); triangulation results in a more robust research design with more accurate and reliable conclusions. This non-experimental, quantitative research uses numerical data gathered via surveys. The study was conducted at several Iran Language Institute (ILI) branches in Isfahan, Iran, to achieve the above goal. Among all the institutes, ILI has the most significant number of language learners and is one of the oldest, having several branches throughout Iran.

Participants

This study consisted of two groups. The initial participants in this research were 80 male and female students enrolled in English courses at various branches of the ILI in Isfahan, Iran. The language learners (aged 12-50 years) had multiple English proficiency levels and were from diverse social backgrounds. The second cohort comprised 80 English as a Foreign Language (EFL) teachers at the Iran Language Institute (ILI). The individuals ranged in age from 20 to 50 years old and possessed various academic qualifications in English, such as degrees in English Literature and English Teaching.

Both groups were selected using convenience sampling. The demographic features of both groups are outlined as follows:

Table 1.
Demographic Background of the Student Subjects

Number of Participants	80
Gender	Male & Female
Age Range	12-50
Level of Proficiency	Elementary, Intermediate, Advanced
Native Language	Persian
Target Language	English

Table 2.
Demographic Background of the Teacher Subjects

Gender	Male & Female
Age	20-50
Year of Experience	Less than 5 years:26, More than 5 years:54
Native Language	Persian
Target Language	English
Educational Degree	Bachelor, master, and doctorate degrees in EFL

Instruments

To meet the objectives of the present study, the following instruments were utilized: (a) two questionnaires, (b) a semi-structured interview, and (c) class observation.

The teachers' questionnaire was based on Moradi's questionnaire (2019), which was modified from other research by Troum (2016) and Othmane (2015). It also additionally relied on a thorough examination of the literature. It gauged the instructors' opinions about set lesson plans. There were two sections to the questionnaire. Age, gender, and other demographic data were gathered in the first section. The second section used a Likert-type scale questionnaire with five gradations to collect data on instructors' opinions regarding fixed LPs in academic English: (1) Strongly Disagree, (2) Disagree, (3) Somehow Agree, (4) Agree, and (5) Strongly Agree. Cronbach's Alpha (.72) was employed to determine the multi-option test's reliability.

The students' questionnaire was composed based on an extensive literature review and the teacher questionnaire from Moradi (2019). It measured the students' attitudes toward fixed lesson plans. There were two sections to the questionnaire. Age, gender, and other demographic data were gathered in the first section. Data about students' opinions of fixed LPs in academic English were acquired in the second section.; it was a Likert-type scaling instrument with five gradations - (1) Strongly Disagree, (2) Disagree, (3) Somehow Agree, (4) Agree, (5) Strongly Agree. Cronbach's Alpha was used to calculate the reliability of this multi-option test. To reauthorize the reliability of the ratings, the difference between the analyses was double-checked through Cohen's kappa test, which was satisfactory at $K = 0.63$ ($p = 0.04$).

Table 3.
The Results of Cohen's Kappa Test

		Value	Error	Approx. T ^b	Approx. Sig.
Measure of Agreement	Kappa	.63	.29	2.00	.04
N of Valid Cases		5			

The following instrument was a semi-structured interview. The interview questions were initially developed from the relevant literature and then conducted with staff with critical responsibilities in teacher education/upgrading and curriculum reform. They were reexamined by other language teaching and learning experts to check if they were suitable for this study. The student interview included four fixed questions and two or three floating ones. Questions were asked about the students' attitudes toward LPs they were being used during every single session. These questions were open-ended. The first question asked the students to define the lesson plan. The second question asked whether they would have liked classes whose teachers use fixed LPs, why, and why not. Question three asked students whether they would have preferred teachers using fixed LPs, why, and why not. Finally, a voluntary comment field was added, where the participants could explain or add any information they thought. All the items in the interview were parallel with the questions asked in the questionnaire. All the teachers were interviewed through a teacher interview questionnaire. They all answered six fixed questions and two or three wandering ones. The first and second questions examined the importance of lesson planning and how LPs affect the teaching process. The third and fourth questions investigated the advantages and disadvantages of fixed lesson plans according to teachers' teaching experiences. The fifth question asked every teacher to discuss the problems of implementing fixed LPs in their classes. Question six sought any possible solutions for those problems raised during the teaching-learning process concerning fixed LPs.

The third instrument was class observation. It is mainly used as the main instrument to conduct classroom research (Chalak, 2021; Inamullah et al., 2008; Zohrabi et al., 2012). This is because implementing this tool allows a researcher to record all the events in a classroom in their usual way without manipulating any variables. However, since the researcher only had the chance to observe some of the sessions, all the sessions under study were video-recorded to reflect what happened in the classroom. Thus, the video-recorded sessions were also applied as part of the instrument; to achieve content validity, a sample of the observed classes was reexamined and reanalyzed by the author.

Data Collection Procedure

The study's pilot phase was carried out at several ILI branches. Thirty instructors and students took part in the trial program. Convenience was the guiding principle in the selection process. Still, great attention was paid to guarantee that the participants adequately reflected the range of factors relevant to the study, including gender, age, professional experience, education, and geography. The pilot phase had some goals in mind including examining the elements that affect teachers' and students' attitudes toward fixed LPs, developing instruments to measure the main variables, and testing data collection tools. The original research questions established based on the study's literature evaluation were refined due to the information and insights gathered during the pilot phase. During the pilot phase, a variety of techniques were used to gain a better understanding of teachers' and students' perceptions and experiences with lesson plans, including conducting interviews with key informants, reviewing studies as well as critical guidelines and training documents on lesson plans, and administering various questionnaires to both teachers and students. The primary goal of the data-collecting phase was to distribute the questionnaires produced during the pilot phase to a representative sample of instructors and students. Eighty teachers and eighty students were chosen using convenience sampling. They were requested to complete surveys regarding their personal information and the value of the LP. Teachers and students who could not participate were mainly missing due to other prior commitments; thus, online surveys were distributed to them. Some instructors and students who completed the

questionnaires were invited to volunteer to participate in one-on-one interviews to explain any survey inconsistencies. Interviews were conducted with the twenty-eight instructors and students who volunteered. Subsequently, the investigator scrutinized the teaching-learning procedure inside natural classroom environments to pinpoint the obstacles that emerged and the approaches educators employed to enhance the teaching-learning process. In addition to recording class observations, all of the interviews were transcribed.

Data Analysis

The analysis began with organizing data from questionnaires, observations, and interviews. It continued with transcribing the data into paper-based transcriptions, coding the data, reporting the findings, interpreting the results, and validating the accuracy of the conclusions of the discussions. Consequently, a detailed transcription of all the data gathered was provided and analyzed statistically about the three research questions the study addressed. Furthermore, descriptive statistics, i.e., frequencies and percentages, were used to analyze quantitative data. The Pearson product-moment correlation was employed to investigate the hypothesis and clarify the correlation and relatedness between teachers' and students' attitudes toward fixed LPs.

The researcher manually analyzed the respondents' responses using the Maykut and Morehouse (1994) approach; they believed that procedures that enable the researcher to record language and behavior are necessary for qualitative inquiry as the data are frequently the words and deeds of people. The best techniques for obtaining these kinds of data include document collection, group interviews, in-depth interviews, and participant observation. Field notes and audio-taped interviews were used by the researcher to gather observational and interview data, which was then transcribed for data analysis. The complex process of making sense of a pile of field notes, audio recordings, and papers is aided by the quick and effective conversion of raw data into plainly legible format for data analysis.

RESULTS & DISCUSSION

Results

Results of The Questionnaires

The following section presents the analysis of the teachers' and students' questionnaires to elicit information on the teacher participants' perceptions and student participants' perceptions of fixed LPs. This section is divided into two subcategories: the student perception questionnaire and the teacher perception questionnaire.

Results of The Teachers' Questionnaires

To achieve the goals of the current study and identify the overall results of teachers' attitudes toward fixed lesson plans, the researcher gathered all the data in Table 4 and calculated the means and the standard deviations. Percentages are also available to clarify the teachers' attitudes transparently.

Table 4.
 The Results of Teachers' Questionnaire toward Fixed LPs

Questions	Strongly agree 5	Agree 4	Somehow agree 3	Disagree 2	Strongly disagree 1	Mean	SD	Agree	Disagree
Q1	25%	60%	15%	0%	0%	4.1	.624	100%	0%

Q2	30%	47.5%	15%	7.5%	0%	4	.866	92%	8%
Q3	47.5%	20%	25%	7.5%	0%	4.07	1.004	92.5%	7.5%
Q4	0%	22.5%	30%	30%	17.5%	2.5	1.02	52.2%	47.5%
Q5	37.5%	42.5%	17.5%	2.5%	0%	4.15	.623	97.5%	2.5%
Q6	35%	57.5%	7.5%	0%	0%	4.27	.588	100%	0%
Q7	35%	45%	17.5%	2.5%	0%	4.12	.774	97.5%	2.5%
Q8	35%	40%	25%	0%	0%	4.1	.768	100%	0%
Q9	12.5%	37.5%	45%	5%	0%	3.57	.767	95%	5%
Q10	35%	45%	17.5%	0%	2.5%	4.07	.704	97.5%	2.5%
Q11	5%	15%	32.5%	42.5%	5%	2.72	1.19	52.5%	47.5%
Q12	35%	42.5%	20%	2.5%	0%	4.1	.8	97.5%	2.5%

The overall finding of the above table shows teachers' attitudes toward fixed lesson plans; the factors with high and low mean are: The teacher needs to plan their lessons. (M=4.27, SD=.588). Moreover, planning lessons are integral to teaching (M=2.5, SD=1.02).

Results of The Students' Questionnaires

To achieve the goals of the current study and identify the whole results of students' attitudes toward fixed lesson plans, the researcher gathered all the data in Table 5 and calculated the means and the standard deviations. Percentages are also available to clarify the students' attitudes transparently.

Table 5.
 The Results of Students' Questionnaire toward Fixed LPs

Questions	Strongly agree 5	Agree 4	Somehow agree 3	Disagree 2	Strongly disagree 1	Mean	SD	Agree	Disagree
Q1	32.5%	50%	17.5%	0%	0%	4.15	.689	100%	0%
Q2	27.5%	45%	12.5%	12.5%	2.5%	3.82	1.04	85%	15%
Q3	30%	40%	25%	2.5%	2.5%	3.92	.932	95%	5%
Q4	15%	45%	35%	2.5%	2.5%	3.67	.851	95%	5%
Q5	20%	57.5%	17.5%	2.5%	2.5%	3.92	.828	95%	5%
Q6	32.5%	35%	22.5%	7.5%	2.5%	3.87	1.02	90%	10%
Q7	35%	52.5%	10%	2.5%	0%	4.2	.714	97.5%	2.5%
Q8	35%	37.5%	27.5%	0%	0%	4.07	.784	100%	0%
Q9	17.5%	52.5%	17.5%	12.5%	0%	3.75	.886	87.5%	12.5%
Q10	15%	47.5%	15%	20%	2.5%	3.52	1.04	77.5%	22.5%
Q11	17.5%	42.5%	27.5%	7.5%	5%	3.6	.912	87.5%	12.5%
Q12	32.5%	32.5%	30%	5%	0%	3.92	.902	95.5%	5%

The overall finding of the above table shows students' attitudes toward fixed lesson plans; the factors with high and low mean are: The learning process can be effective if students' needs and concerns are considered and adapted to teaching practices (M=4.15, SD=.689). Planning excites students' cognitive stimulation to participate in deeper mental investigations of the subject matter within the learning concept (M=3.6, SD=.856). Teachers should prepare a fixed lesson plan before entering the classroom to control the class satisfactorily (M=3.6, SD=.912).

Correlation Between Teachers' And Students' Attitudes Toward Fixed LPs

Table 6 shows the mean score (M = 46.1) and standard deviation (SD = 4.89) of teachers' attitudes and the mean score (M = 47.46) and standard deviation (SD = 4.99) of students' attitudes. The results of the Pearson Correlation test were consulted to discover if there was a significant correlation between these two variables.

Table 6.
 Descriptive Statistics of Teachers' and Students' Attitudes toward Fixed Lesson Plans

	Mean	SD	N
Teachers' attitudes	46.1	4.89	80
Students' attitudes	47.46	4.99	80

The correlation between EFL teachers' and students' attitudes toward fixed lesson plans was investigated using the Pearson product-moment correlation coefficient. The findings revealed a medium, positive correlation between the two variables, $r=.35$, $N= 80$, $p< .01$, with higher teachers' attitudes toward fixed lesson plans was associated with higher students' attitudes toward fixed lesson plans. The results are shown in the figure below.

Table 7
 Correlation between Teachers' and Students' Attitudes toward Fixed Lesson Plans

		Teachers' attitude	Students' attitudes
Teachers' attitude	Pearson Correlation	1	.35**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.001
	N	80	80

***. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).*

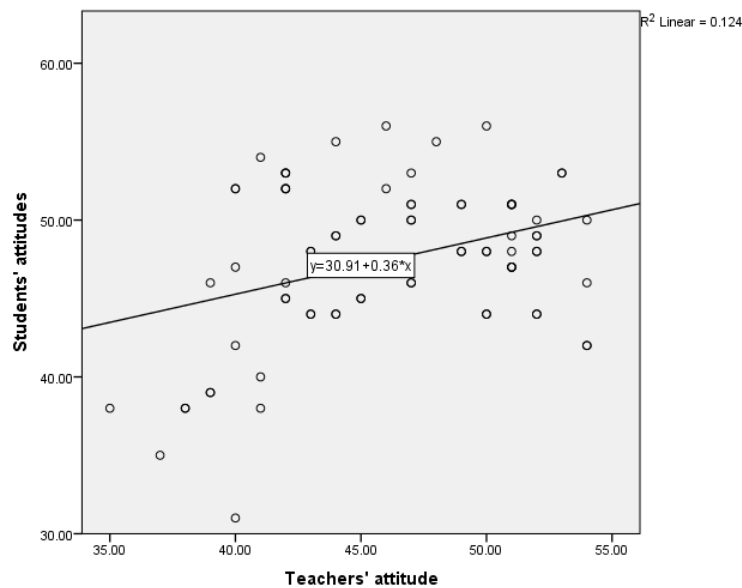


Figure 1.
 Scatter-plot Diagram of the Correlation between Teachers' and Students' Attitudes toward Fixed Lesson Plans

Figure 1. Correlation between teachers' and students' attitudes toward fixed lesson plans

Results Of Semi-Structured Interviews

The researcher used the Maykut and Morehouse study approach (1994) to analyze data manually. First, all interviews were transcribed and coded. During the coding

interviews, teachers expressed and shared several commonalities. Based on coding, their feedback was compiled into a list of common patterns shown in Table 8.

Table 8.
Categories Generated in Opening Coding

Noticeable Patterns in Coding teachers' interviews
<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Creative teachers would be limited in generating creative lesson plans.2. Teachers believe pupils also require regularity and structure to tackle their challenges.3. LPs provide more personal time.4. Teachers may deviate from the script to fit students' needs.5. Teachers gain familiarity with the script as they use the application more frequently.
Noticeable Patterns in Coding students' interviews
<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Students express boredom.2. LPs assist students in achieving their set goals, especially proficiency and accuracy.3. The program equips students with the ability to succeed in other subjects and on standardized assessments.4. Students believe that LPs work.5. Teachers with fixed lesson plans are more trustworthy to students.

Semi-Structured Interviews Analysis Of Teacher Participants

The following section presents the analysis results of teacher participants' semi-structured interviews. The analysis of the responses to the first question (i.e., what is the importance of lesson planning?) indicated that the essence of lesson planning lies in the following reasons. It guides the teachers to the specific things they will achieve in every session and ultimately at the end of the course. Some of the participants' direct responses are as follows to shed light on this issue: *"If you have an LP, you know what to do"*. Another teacher asserted: *"It is important because it makes you preoccupied. It saves time"*. Referring to what the third teacher said, *"preoccupying you with a roadmap, you can save time during the teaching-learning process"*. Many teachers insisted, *"By having structured lesson plans, we already know what to do daily and what to expect to achieve in due time"*. It also brings a significant amount of time and effort for teachers to save and dedicate this time and struggle to more critical activities and ideas, such as preparing extra reliable contexts according to what they should teach or providing some advantageous teaching aids. Numerous teachers believed and said, *"It frees up much time"*. It also assists teachers in meeting their instructional goals in a certain way. In this regard, one of the teacher participants asserted that *"With an LP, you know what to do and what you want, so you do your best to achieve it, and therefore, you can satisfy students' learning needs and discern between instructions to entitle all students to benefit from them"*.

Lesson plans enable teachers to satisfy students' learning needs and make them discern various instructions to pave the way for all students to benefit from lessons. Setting goals, developing creative learning activities, and commenting on the outcomes of instructions through appropriate assessments are the other essential factors exclusive to lesson plans for teaching English. To shed light on this issue, we can refer to the sentence from one of the teacher participants: *"LP acts as a guideline to set goals, develop learning activities, and assess and comment on the outcomes of instruction through*

appropriate assessments". They all repeated the same concept about educational goals and considering students' demands, such as: *"The majority of the students thrive under the lesson plan because they are looking for structure, and it has"*. They believed: *"The students need structure and routine; without it, they will likely be off-task"*. They also said, *"We know the needs, and we know the routine, so it is easier to set expectations and help students to obtain them"*.

Considering the second question, i.e., (what are the effects of lesson planning on your teaching practice?), teachers' responses revealed that lesson planning positively affects their teaching practice in many ways. One is elucidating what to do and what not to do in the classroom. To shed light on this issue, one of the teachers exactly declared that *"LPs act as roadmaps"*. Another is enabling the use of class time effectively. In this regard, we can refer to the following sentence: *"It prevents time loss"*. Lesson plans were more fruitful for novice teachers as they agreed, *"Everything is self-explanatory like the objectives are all laid out, the things I am supposed to say are all scripted, they are right there, so you can read them"*. Another efficacy is enabling teachers to utilize their class time effectively. *"Time management wise, it is easier for lessons to be scripted and planned"*. Furthermore, lesson planning gives teachers enough self-confidence to affect their professional development directly and in a good light. One of the teachers said to shed light on this sentence: *"If you know what to do, you will not get anxious, which will affect your efficiency"*. A well-designed lesson plan assists teachers with delivering effective and engaging lessons that meet the needs of their students and ensure that their learning objectives are met. The previous sentence can be an example of increasing efficiency. Regarding engaging lessons that meet the needs of their students and ensuring learning objectives, one of the teacher participants asserted: *"LPs can satisfy most of the student's needs and desires so they become more involved in the class as they are attracted and therefore, you can satisfy students' learning needs to discern between instructions to entitle all students to benefit from them"*.

Question three addresses the advantages of fixed lesson planning for teaching English as a foreign language. The analysis of the teachers' responses showed they need structure when they teach, as they said: *"If you are coming in trying to feel your way, you are going to lose them"*. A lesson plan acts as a roadmap during their teaching practice. To clarify this issue, more answers are written: *"If you have an LP, you do not get puzzled," "LPs guide teachers through the teaching-learning process". or "We already know what to do with fixed LPs". "Students like to see themselves grow". "I think having LPs helps to organize students' studies so they can focus more"*. These all showed that a good lesson plan is a guideline during the teaching practice. It also permits teachers to make the most of their time. They said, *"You can save time during the teaching-learning process when you follow an LP"*. Fixed lesson plans can provide established structures for learners to track their progress. *"When the road is clear, you can move on smoothly and look at the way from where you have started moving on"*.

Fixed lesson plans provide consistency in the classroom, ensuring that all students receive the same information and skills. To shed on this issue, one teacher interviewee mentioned that *"All students receive the same information and skills if you have an LP"*. On the other hand, teachers who use different imaginative strategies may show more flexibility in adapting students' individual needs and interests and make the learning process more engaging and relevant. The following sentence can be referred to as *"knowing different strategies makes you get prepared for different tastes and therefore learning becomes more interesting"*. Ultimately, the effectiveness of a great teacher depends on their ability to engage students and facilitate the learning process, regardless of their learning approach.

Question four addresses the disadvantages of fixed lesson planning for teaching English as a foreign language. The analysis of the teachers' responses showed that lesson plans limit teachers in terms of their creativity; they are obliged to follow what exactly has been dictated to them. To shed on this issue, one teacher interviewee mentioned that *"Following LP hangs a rope around your neck. Therefore, you cannot do what you like"*. Another one said: *"You do not get to use some of that creativity sometimes because you have to follow this script, and if you get away from the script too much, you might get penalized"*. They can also only carry out what is written in the lesson plan pamphlet. They were also unable to practice more. To shed light on this issue, one of the teachers said, *"In an LP-based instruction, the follow-up activities are even clear"*. Another disadvantage can be preventing teachers from recognizing and using various instructions to let all students benefit from them. Many teachers say, *"An LP-based instruction could not make a distinction between individual differences"*. Not allowing to comment on the outcomes of instructions through various assessments more than predetermined exams in the syllabus is another disadvantage of fixed lesson planning for teaching English. To shed on this issue, we can refer to the sentence announcing: *"Following an LP makes the assessment process too general, so you cannot focus on the parts that you as a teacher know are more challenging"*.

Considering any solutions for those problems raised during the actual teaching process concerning fixed LPs, the results of the analysis of the responses indicated that teachers require managers to allow them to possess some creativity and independence. We can refer to this sentence to address this: *"LP-based instruction will reach its best when managers go hand in hand with teachers"*.

Semi-Structured Interviews Analysis of Student Participants

The following section presents the analysis results of student participants' semi-structured interviews and their views and ideas about fixed lesson plans.

Question one (i.e., what is a lesson plan?) in the questionnaire was planned to examine if students know the meaning of the lesson plan. A consensus emerged that they define a lesson plan as a description of the materials that are supposed to be taught, a method to be applied, a specific time to be dedicated, and an appropriate place to hold the class, as well as establishing the evaluation process in detail. To shed light on this issue, we can refer to this sentence: *"LP is a guideline that describes what is going to be taught when it is going to be taught, and also what is going to be assessed"*. They also agreed that a *"Lesson plan is a timetable that tells teachers what should be taught each session"*. And *"Lesson plan provides students and teachers a detailed map to study the sources"*.

The analysis of the responses to the second question (i.e., what is the importance of lesson planning?) indicated that a lesson plan is vital because it excites students' cognitive stimulation to participate in deeper mental investigations of the subject matter within the learning concept. The following sentence refers to this issue: *"When all tastes are paid the same weight, the students got interested, and therefore, they involved more in the learning process"*.

The results of the analysis of the responses to the third question (i.e., do you prefer teachers who use fixed LPs or teachers who use a variety of teaching methods?), most students reported that they like teachers who used fixed LPs; however, some students were eager to experience having a class with teachers who integrate different teaching methods. To shed light on this issue, we can refer to these quoted sentences of student participants *"Not all of us have the same idea. I like my classes as they are, but some of my friends do not"*. or *"A student may favor an LP-based instruction while the other favors other teaching methods as I like different strategies"* and *"It is so important to*

have a teacher who is aware of what he/she is going to teach". or *"We like teachers with fixed LPs because we get the sense of having a clear educational way ahead of us"*.

Considering the fourth question (i.e., do you like classes that apply fixed LPS? Why? Why not?), students' responses revealed that most of them enjoyed the lessons being taught through fixed LPs because their overall language proficiency improved since their teachers' expectations of students' achievements were not only apparent in every session but also at the end of the course. We can refer to this sentence to highlight this issue: *"When I know what I will be assessed on, I will do my best to get the most out of the teaching-learning process"*.

The results of the analysis of the responses showed that knowing what to do in each session is beneficial for both teachers and students. When the class has a fixed structure and an overall form, the students ensure that the teacher cares about the ultimate results of the course. We can refer to this sentence to highlight this issue: *"LP gives structure to the whole teaching-learning process. Therefore, the teacher cares more about his teaching practice"*. Teachers with fixed LPs have more mastery over their teaching practice. In this sense, the utterances could be, *"When you know the road, you can put your feet more strongly on the ground"*. Or *"Fixed LPs prevent repetitions, too"*. Or *"LP-based instruction leaves no place for redundancy"*. However, using fixed LPs has some disadvantages for them as well. A fixed LP prevents teachers and students from enjoying the classroom, sometimes boring the class. To shed light on this issue, one of the students said, *"It is not that much fun when everything is preplanned"*.

Considering any solutions for those problems raised while learning a foreign language concerning fixed LPs and analyzing the responses indicated that integrating some previous creative teaching experiences into the teaching practice by the teachers will decrease such problems. To shed light on this issue, one of the students said that *"a class will be more enjoyable when experience is added as a flavor"*.

Results of Observations

The researcher observed ten sessions of the classes, and the results are depicted as follows: Throughout classroom observations, all teachers had an LP ahead of them. They followed it for the most part, but some sections were required to be performed diversely. Some teachers tailored the LPs to fit students' needs, and many added to it. During the observations, students knew exactly what lessons and parts would be taught and were also familiar with time management and what would happen next. No students were confused or undisciplined; they were all on task.

Students and teachers reported two significant problems with using fixed LPs during teaching-learning. One of the problems was the lack of creativity on the teachers' side, and the other was students' boredom. Considering the lack of creativity, the observation results indicated that the teachers under investigation made no attempts to use imagination when facing any problem. This might be due to the lack of experience or strict rules set by the ILI principals. Considering the second problem, i.e., students' boredom, when no creativity was integrated into the classroom, the classes followed a strict teaching-learning environment in which students' eagerness and engagement decreased, minimizing their overall language achievement.

Discussion

Since the present study aimed to analyze the teachers' and students' attitudes concerning fixed LPs in the EFL context of Iran, the first and second research questions

focused on their attitudes separately. Therefore, this research attempted to address the following research questions:

1. What are the attitudes of Iranian EFL teachers toward fixed lesson plans?

To answer this question, the author distributed a questionnaire adopted by Moradi (2019), which addressed personal information and the importance of the lesson plan. Some teachers were interviewed to clarify obscure points in the questionnaire and elicit teachers' comments concerning fixed lesson plans. The data gathered from these sources revealed that English teachers agreed with utilizing lesson plans, which aligns with other research results (Nesari & Heidari, 2014; Straessle, 2014), which reported that lesson planning matters. Therefore, teachers prefer to use fixed LPs to make the most of their class time. Their self-confidence also increased, and they made progress in their educational development; therefore, teachers can make the most of their time and provide consistency in their classroom, which entirely goes with Vdovina and Gaibisso (2013). In addition, the results of this study also referred to creativity and lesson planning; the teachers' mastery of utilizing fixed LPs combined with some creativity due to their teaching experience enables them to discern between instructions to entitle all students to benefit from them, consequently improving the overall classroom achievement. The teacher had to deal with this issue and make proper decisions to positively influence students' attitudes toward fixed lesson plans.

The students' attitudes toward fixed lesson plans are equally important in every EFL class. Therefore, the second research question regarded students' attitudes concerning fixed LPs in the EFL context of Iran. Thus, the second research question asked,

2. What are the attitudes of Iranian EFL students toward fixed lesson plans?

To answer the second question, the author distributed another questionnaire that addressed personal information, the importance of the lesson plan, and the effects of lesson plans on classroom management. She also interviewed some students to clarify obscure points in the questionnaire and elicit teachers' comments concerning fixed lesson plans. The data from these sources wholly synchronized with what Oser and Baeriswyl (2001) revealed: a lesson plan is crucial because students' needs and concerns are considered and adapted to teaching practices. They also believe that their overall language achievement improved since what the teachers require students to achieve is evident at every session and the end of the course. In addition, if the class has a structure and an overall form due to utilizing LP, the teacher cares about the type and has more mastery over their teaching. On the one hand, these findings agree with Kamran and Sharghi (2011), who reported that the participants have good attitudes toward it. On the other hand, these findings do not agree with Kamran and Sharghi (2011) in that students did not have a comprehensive grasp of lesson planning.

The current study addressed the final research question concerning the correlation between teachers' and students' attitudes toward fixed lesson plans. This research question asks:

3. Is there any correlation between teachers' and students' attitudes toward fixed lesson plans?

The data analysis showed that the two variables were positively associated. Since the contemporary literature concerning these issues seemed to lack any research investigating the correlation between teachers' and students' attributes, the author planned to contribute something to the mentioned areas by conducting the present study. Therefore, this research is novel in shedding light on the study of the Iranian

EFL institutes and promoting the awareness of both teachers and students toward using fixed LPs in classrooms.

CONCLUSION

The current research concentrated on teachers' and students' attitudes toward fixed LPs in EFL classrooms. Since the contemporary literature concerning these issues seemed to need more detailed descriptions of what goes on in institutes and almost no research investigating these attributes in universities, the author planned to contribute to the areas above by conducting the present study. Though it was just a small-scale exploration, this research tried to give insight into the study of Iranian EFL institutes and promote the awareness of teachers and students toward using fixed LPs in classrooms. There can be positive and negative attitudes toward using fixed LPs in an EFL context. It strongly depends on how skillfully LPs are prepared and used in the educational setting and the diversity of the classroom learners. After analyzing the data, the result revealed that producing well-designed lessons influences classroom management. The answers show that most teachers and students believe in the usefulness of some strategies of lesson planning and classroom management, but not all of them.

According to the results of this study, considering the investigation of teachers' attitudes and students' attitudes toward fixed LPs in the EFL context, teachers' use of fixed LPs sounds to be a typical quality of a successful teacher. Students are also eager to be taught through fixed LPs and improve their overall achievement during the learning process. As teachers' attitudes toward LPs directly influence students' attitudes, and because of the significance of keeping the right balance between these two features, as well as the significant role this equilibrium plays in achieving educational goals, authors, teachers, syllabus designers, and administrators should be aware of this significance and help teachers to manage the right balance in their classrooms by designing the curriculum and teaching contents which can serve this goal.

No study can be conducted under completely ideal conditions; every study has problems and limitations. Regarding the study's limitations, this study is no exception. The study's boundaries come from the limited population of the subjects and lack of enough time; therefore, it was challenging to include a large area in this kind of research because of limited time and resources.

This research offers practical implications to teachers, administrators, and curriculum developers apart from its limitations and shortcomings. It implies that teachers should be conscious of fixed LPs. They need to master fixed LPs and consider their quality with care. They should also try to add creativity when the students get bored to provoke more engagement and, consequently, higher-quality learning. They must understand the students' characteristics, such as their language level, educational and cultural background, motivation to learn English, and different learning styles. By keeping these in mind, students' needs and concerns are considered and adapted to teaching practices through discerning between instructions to enable all students to benefit from them. This trend can also help teachers meet their instructional goals. It prevents repetition and boredom, especially in low-level classes.

The following suggestions could be proposed to the researchers who want to conduct a study on lesson planning. This study was restricted to examining only ten sessions of the classes and interviewing with some volunteers. In the future, other researchers should conduct further research on more sessions and interview more students and teachers, which can result in more generalization. The present study was also

restricted to examining fixed LPs; therefore, analyzing other lesson plans is also suggested.

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